



2016 CORPORATION COUNSEL ANNUAL REPORT

J. Blair Ward, Corporation Counsel
Yelena Zarwell, Assistant Corporation Counsel
Connie Freeberg, Paralegal II/County Board Reporter
Tom Antholine, Assistant Corporation Counsel (Child Support)
Kendall Wick, Assistant Corporation Counsel (Child Support)

The Corporation Counsel is the chief legal advisor to the County Board, the County Administrator and all County Board committees, commissions, boards, department heads and staff.

Responsibilities of the Corporation Counsel Office

- Attend all meetings of the County Board of Supervisors and provide legal advice and opinions to the County Board and County Board Committees
- Draft resolutions and ordinances with executive summaries to be acted on by the County Board as requested by County Board Committees and the County Administrator
- Issue legal opinions and advice to elected officials, the County Administrator, department heads and staff
- Prepare and arrange publication of County Board minutes and annual minute books
- Serve as Assistant County Administrator to make necessary decisions in the County Administrator's absence and provide direct supervision over certain county department heads
- Serve as Public Information Officer and provide legal representation in the emergency operations center during emergencies
- Prepare bid requirements and requests for proposals for publication in the County's official newspaper and County website
- Provide guidance to the Planning & Zoning Committee and Board of Adjustment on issuing conditional use permits and variances

2016 Office Summary

- Prosecuted mental commitments and guardianships on behalf of the Human Services Department:
 - Mental Commitments 127
 - Mental Commitment Extensions and/or Return to Inpatient Facility 52
 - Guardianships, Protective Placements and Annual Reviews 61
- Represented Jefferson County Human Services in administrative appeals involving child abuse and neglect substantiation cases

- Provided legal representation to the Human Services Department in resolving a dispute in favor of Jefferson County with Winnebago Mental Health Institute involving reimbursement for inpatient stay
- Provided legal opinions to the Human Services Department on records confidentiality and issues related to the release of confidential records under Chapters 48 and 51 of the Wisconsin Statutes
- Provided legal reviews on multiple service provider contracts for the Human Services Department such as contracts for inpatient and outpatient mental health services
- Supervised outside legal counsel retained by the County's insurance company to defend the County against claims during litigation and settlement discussions
- Represented the Planning & Zoning Department in the enforcement of zoning ordinances through enforcement letters and lawsuits against property owners
- Collected delinquent taxes and foreclosed on tax delinquent properties:
 - Foreclosed on 15 tax delinquent properties in Jefferson County which included 5 with houses
 - Arranged for home inspections and showings of tax delinquent houses to prospective buyers
 - Conducted real estate closings for the sale of tax delinquent properties
 - Worked with former owners to repurchase tax delinquent properties from the County or to vacate their houses prior to purchase through public bidding
- Commenced a lawsuit on behalf of the Jefferson County Highway Department after a landowner failed to remove a portion of his fence located in the highway right-of-way preventing the Highway Department from completing a road improvement project
- Drafted contracts for public works projects and other services and products required for County operations
- Drafted offers to purchase property for County acquisition
- Represented the Jefferson County Parks Department by filing a petition for a restraining order after a citizen made threats to harm Park staff
- Conducted real estate closing for the purchase of additional land to expand the Garman Nature Preserve
- Negotiated with the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection to resolve an issue with the Parks Department involving camping at County parks
- Negotiated with We Energies for a license agreement on behalf of the Parks Department allowing for the use of a former utility corridor in Watertown as a biking and walking trail
- Attended Town meetings to address concerns related to County projects that required exceeding Town road weight limits
- Provided legal counsel to County Clerk during presidential recount
- Provided legal counsel to the County Administrator and Human Resources Department for resolving union grievances, conducting employee investigations, addressing employee discipline and other personnel matters
- Provided legal counsel to the Sheriff and Law Enforcement Committee in responding to union grievance

- Provided legal counsel during collective bargaining sessions with the Sheriff's Deputies and settled the collective bargaining agreement through 2019
- Graduated from the LEAN program and presented to the Administration & Rules Committee a streamlined procedure for approving resolutions and other business going before the County Board and County Board Committees
- Drafted Jefferson County ordinances and amendments to ordinances such as the Records Retention Ordinance and the Parking Ordinance
- Provided legal opinions on updating Jefferson County's HIPAA privacy and procedures manual
- Attended Ebola Training Exercise with the Jefferson County Health Department sponsored by the Wisconsin Regional Healthcare Coalitions
- Drafted enforcement letters and provided legal counsel on the abatement of health code/ordinance violations
- Completed Emergency Management Online Course and participated in training exercise
- Drafted Jefferson County Alcohol Treatment Court Policy and Procedures Manual to be used for newly created Alcohol Treatment Court
- Drafted Social Media Policy to provide guidance to staff on interacting with the public through social media
- Provided legal representation to the Child Support office at court hearings for the establishment of paternity and the establishment, modification and enforcement of child support orders
- Attended Wisconsin Association of County Corporation Counsels and Wisconsin Counties Association sponsored events for professional development
- Negotiated with landowners for property acquisition for various County projects
- Provided legal advice to County Departments in responding to public records requests
- Provided legal guidance to the Economic Development Director on completing an application to the IRS for recognition of the Glacial Heritage Development Partnership as 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization
- Reviewed and approved multiple contracts for the Fair Park in preparation for the annual County Fair including marketing partnership agreements and contracts for Fair entertainment
- Presented to a high school communications class at Maranatha Baptist Academy on parliamentary procedure